

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

March 24, 1998

LB 1070

school nurse issue, which has come up before, we discussed it on the bill that Senator Hartnett had. Likewise, we can do public health nursing, and in part those public health nurses can be working with our schools to provide school nursing and address that problem. There are hospitals, which are in our rural areas, which can convert to a limited service hospital that meets the medical needs of their rural area, but they need help in making that conversion, just as nursing homes would need help in making conversions. They're under tier three. Public health, in general, we talked about the Native American public health problems. Our whole state is having problems in public health. We do not have access in most counties, I believe we are talking about 80 counties, essentially, that don't have a countywide health system. There are 13 that do. So the vast majority of the state is without a public health system whatsoever, and it seems to me that, again, we need to address that. Telemedicine is another area that we can help and again reach out with expertise across the state. The medical loan program that we have for students so they serve our underserved areas of the state would be included. Elder care to help our elderly not need the nursing home. These and other areas are included in tier three and would be eliminated through the Witek amendment. What she is suggesting is instead of diverting this money from the Medicaid system and from the tobacco settlements into meeting these obligations that we have not been able to fund in the past, she would rather have it go the appropriations process and my guess is it would never end up going back into the public health sector. We need to address this long neglected part of the health care system and understand that we can't do it through the process Senator Witek is talking about because that process is now in place and has not addressed those needs; that this system is one that is based on the model that we've had with the Environmental Trust Fund, with the Educational Trust Fund, which were established when the lottery was established. Those funds are handled in an independent fashion with oversight by the Legislature. We have an amendment from Senator Wehrbein, which he has passed out a summary of, an explanation of, which will have those...this fund...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...these funds set up by this bill be Cash